A. **TITLE:**  The American Legal System

B. **COURSE NUMBER:**  LEST 101

C. **CREDIT HOURS:**  3

D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:**  NO

E. **GER CATEGORY:**  NONE

F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:**  FALL AND SPRING

G. **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

A general overview of the American legal system, including federal and state court structures, the roles and responsibilities of various participants in the legal process, and the progress of civil and criminal cases through the courts.

H. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES:**

   a. Pre-requisite(s): NONE
   b. Co-requisite(s): NONE
   c. Pre- or co-requisite(s): NONE

I. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Student Learning Outcome [SLO]</th>
<th>PSLO</th>
<th>GER</th>
<th>ISLO</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>a.</strong> Describe the structure and functions of American federal and state courts, including courts of original jurisdiction and appellate courts.</td>
<td>Understand and explain the structure and functions of the American legal system, including the interplay of constitutions, statutes, common law and administrative law.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Industry, Professional, Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills</td>
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<td><strong>b.</strong> Explain and describe the procedural requirements for a criminal or civil case to enter the legal system.</td>
<td>Understand and explain the jurisdictional requirements of federal and state courts.</td>
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<td>Industry, Professional, Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills</td>
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<td><strong>c.</strong> Discuss and analyze the roles of judges, attorneys, mediators, legal assistants, and others who act within the legal system including ethical concerns.</td>
<td>Understand and explain the roles of judges, attorneys, mediators, legal assistants, and others who act within the legal system.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Industry, Professional, Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills</td>
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| KEY | Institutional Student Learning Outcomes [ISLO 1 – 5] | Social Responsibility
Ethical Reasoning [ER] | Communication Skills
Written [W] |
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<td>ISLO #</td>
<td>ISLO &amp; Subsets</td>
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</table>
| 1 | Communication Skills
Oral [O], Written [W] | | |
| 2 | Critical Thinking
Critical Analysis [CA], Inquiry & Analysis [IA], Problem Solving [PS] | | |
| 3 | Foundational Skills
Information Management [IM], Quantitative Lit./Reasoning [QTR] | | |
| 4 | Social Responsibility
Ethical Reasoning [ER], Global Learning [GL], Intercultural Knowledge [IK], Teamwork [T] | | |
| 5 | Industry, Professional, Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills | | |

- **d.** Examine sources of federal and state law, including state and federal constitutions, statutes, administrative law, and common law.

- **e.** Explain the relationship of the Liberal Arts and Sciences on the one hand and law on the other.

  - Understand and explain the structure and functions of the American legal system, including the interplay of constitutions, statutes, common law and administrative law.

  - Understand and explain the relationship of Legal Studies to the arts and sciences.
J. **APPLIED LEARNING COMPONENT:** Yes ___ X ___ No ______


L. **REFERENCES:** Articles of current interest and other resources placed on the course online learning site.

M. **EQUIPMENT:** Technology Enhanced Classroom.

N. **GRADING METHOD:** A-F

O. **SUGGESTED MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:** Participation, in-class exams, final exam, assignments and research paper.

P. **DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE:**

I. Overview of Law and Legal Systems
   A. Law, generally
      1. Definition
      2. Role
   B. Legal Systems
      1. Common Law
      2. Civil Law
   
II. Sources of American Law
   A. Federalism
      1. Definition
      2. Importance
   B. Federal Law
      1. Constitution
      2. Statutes
      3. Administrative regulations
      4. Federal court decisions
   C. State Law
      1. Constitutions
      2. Statutes
      3. Administrative regulations
      4. Court decisions
   D. Local Law
   
III. Types of American Law
   A. Public Law
      1. Definition
      2. Examples
      3. Role
   B. Private Law
      1. Definition
      2. Examples
      3. Role
   C. Civil Law
      1. Definition
      2. Examples
3. Role
4. Overlap with private law

D. Criminal Law
1. Definition
2. Examples
3. Role
4. Overlap with public law

E. Substantive Law
1. Definition
2. Examples
3. Role
4. Importance

F. Procedural Law
1. Definition
2. Sources
   a. Constitutional
   b. Statutory
3. Role
4. Importance

IV. Federal Courts
A. Jurisdiction, generally
   1. Geographical
   2. Subject matter
   3. Hierarchical
B. History
   1. Constitutional establishment
   2. Statutory establishment
   3. Judicial review
C. General federal jurisdiction
D. Specialty Courts

V. State Courts
A. Structure, generally
   1. Trial courts
   2. Appellate courts
   3. Specialized courts
B. New York court structure
C. Jurisdiction

VI. The Judiciary
A. Federal
   1. Overview
   2. Selection
B. State
   1. Overview
   2. Selection
   3. New York process
C. Role of the judiciary
   1. Running trial process
   2. Making policy
   3. Proper or appropriate role of judges
      a. Judicial activism
b. Judicial restraint

VII. Attorneys
   A. Credentials and Requirements
   B. Role in the legal process
   C. Types of attorneys
   D. Representation of the indigent
   E. Ethical requirements

VIII. Legal Assistants
   A. Role in the legal process
   B. Limitations on their actions
   C. Ethical requirements

IX. Outside Influences on the Courtroom
   A. Interest Groups
   B. Media
   C. Courts and Policy

X. Criminal Cases
   A. Parties
   B. Basic pre-trial procedures
   C. Trial procedures
   D. Procedural protections
   E. Trial
   F. Sentencing
   G. Appeal

XI. Civil Cases
   A. Parties
   B. Class-action suits
   C. Settlement
   D. Discovery
   E. Trial procedure
   F. Appeal

Q. LABORATORY OUTLINE: N/A